

struggle against Islamic fascism, which is a real present danger to the future of the United States of America, to me, is almost unconscionable.

This is a struggle we are engaged in. This is a struggle for our time. It is one that I believe history will look back upon and suggest that we met the threat that would have fundamentally changed the future of the world, and we met it before it did so. We met it with strength, with determination, and we overcame the doubters, overcame those who would have rather cut and run. I am not for cutting and running when it comes to the future security of this country. I have patience because things that are difficult and meaningful take time. We have to give that time.

I suggest there are some things that we are finding out now. Another effort I have been working on in Iraq is the intelligence information we have been able to gather from the former regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan. This has been a project that Congressman PETER HOEKSTRA, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, has been working on—and I have worked with him—to make sure these 48,000 boxes, containing roughly 2 million documents, are released to the American public and the world to determine what was the intelligence assessment and the activity level and, in particular, in Iraq with Saddam, and with his interaction with elements of al-Qaida or other terrorist organizations.

What we are finding is that some of the statements that have been made on the floor and statements that were made just as recently as March 19, 2006 by my colleague from Pennsylvania, Congressman JACK MURTHA, who said:

There was no terrorism in Iraq before we went there. None. There was no connection with al-Qaida. There was no connection with terrorism in Iraq itself.

Yet if we look at some of the documents that are being released by Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte—and, again, only a few hundred of the millions of documents have been released. As a caveat, while Congressman HOEKSTRA and I are excited about the fact that DNI decided to release these documents, the pace of the release is, let us say, unsatisfactory to this point.

We have, with the blogosphere, the Internet, the opportunity to put these documents out there and have almost instantaneously translated postings about what these documents contain.

During the time the Director of National Intelligence Negroponte has had these documents—this is 3 years ago—less than 2 percent of the documents have been translated. At this pace, my grandchildren may know what is in these documents.

We need to get these documents out. Mr. President, 600 over a little over a 2-week period is almost the same pace as translating with the people they had over in DNI Negroponte's shop. We need to get these documents out quicker. Why? Because if we look at

what is in these documents, there is important information in understanding the connection between Iraq and terrorist organizations and the threat we were facing, the potential threat we had talked about, which is the coordination between a country that had used chemical and biological weapons, was thought universally to have chemical and biological weapons, and terrorists who have expressed a direct desire to use those weapons and get access to them.

If we look at a report that was issued by the Pentagon Joint Forces Command translating and analyzing some of these documents, called the "Iraqi Perspectives," on page 54, they write: Beginning in 1994, the Fedayeen Saddam opened its own paramilitary training camps for volunteers—this is 9 years, by the way, before the Iraq war—graduating more than 7,200 "good men racing full with courage and enthusiasm" in the first year.

Mr. President, 7,200 in the first year, 1994.

Beginning in 1998, these camps began hosting "Arab volunteers from Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, 'the Gulf,' and Syria." Volunteers. I wonder why they would be volunteering to help Saddam. It is not clear, it says, from the available evidence where are all these non-Iraqi volunteers who were "sacrificing for the cause" went to ply their newfound skills. Before the summer of 2002, most volunteers went home upon the completion of training. They didn't stay in Iraq. They came for training from countries in the gulf regions, and they went home. Odd that they would be fighting for the cause which would, in that case, be Saddam, if they went home.

Before the summer of 2002, as I said, most volunteers went home upon completion of the training, but these camps were humming with frenzied activity in the months immediately prior to the war.

As late as January 2003, the volunteers participated in a special training event called the Heroes Attack.

Stephen Hayes, who deserves a tremendous amount of credit for his reporting on these documents in the Weekly Standard, has brought this issue to the forefront and has awakened Members of Congress, myself included, to the importance of discovering the content of these documents as well as some of the information contained in these documents.

He reminds us of the special significance of that training in 1998:

That is the same year that the U.N. weapons inspectors left Iraq for good; the same year a known al Qaeda operative visited Baghdad for 16 days in March; the same year the U.S. embassies were bombed in East Africa; the same year the U.S. bombed Baghdad in Operation Desert Fox; and, the same year Saddam wired \$150,000 to Jabir Salim, the former Iraqi Ambassador to the Czech Republic, and ordered him to recruit Islamic radicals to blow up the headquarters of Radio Free Europe.

What we have here is, again, information that I believe is vitally important

for the American public to see. I encourage Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte to step up the pace. Congressman HOEKSTRA and I have introduced legislation which would require just that: it would require the release of these documents and provides a way to do so.

We introduced this legislation prior to the decision to release these documents, but, again, I just make the point that the pace with which these documents are being released is inadequate. We need to continue to step that up, allow this information to get out for people to see, pro and con—all the information that is available to us. These are old documents. They are at least 3 years old; in some cases much more than that. The classified nature is specious, at best. We want to protect names, obviously, if there are reasons to protect certain names because of potential fallout from having their names released. If there are recipes for chemical weapons, fine. But the bottom line is most of this information should be released, can be released, and is not being released.

I assure my colleagues—and I think I can speak for Congressman HOEKSTRA in this regard—we will stay on this issue, and we will make sure all of this information is made available to the American public so we have a better understanding of what the situation was in Iraq prior to the war.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, let me begin by congratulating members on both sides of the aisle on the Judiciary Committee for the fine work they did yesterday on the immigration bill. My expectation is that it will be coming to the floor soon.

I wish to echo some of the remarks that were made by my senior colleague from Illinois, Senator DICK DURBIN. I think everybody in this Chamber should be interested in a comprehensive immigration reform bill, one that takes seriously the security of our borders, one that takes seriously enforcing the hiring practices of employers, but also one that makes sure we are providing a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million to 12 million undocumented workers who are making enormous contributions to this country.

The bill that came out of the Judiciary Committee last night strikes the right balance. I believe it is a bill that is worthy of support on both sides of the aisle, and I am looking forward to participating in the debate on what I think will be one of the most important issues we face in the Senate.

LOBBYING REFORM

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I come to the Chamber today to address the ethics bill that has been pending before